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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9848
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3783
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 000222

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KICC](#) [KCRM](#) [TD](#)

SUBJECT: PRIVY COUNCIL RULES AGAINST EXTREMIST LEADER, YASIN ABU BAKR

REF: 07 PORT OF SPAIN 0094

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: A May 5 Privy Council ruling against Jamaat al-Muslimeen (JAM) leader Yasin Abu Bakr has cleared the way for local courts to order the sale of Bakr's real estate holdings in Trinidad in settlement of a US\$5 million debt pending from the JAM's 1990 attempted coup. Bakr's perceived influence with criminal gangs may impede the GOTT from recovering the debt. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) Following the 1990 attempted coup, the court awarded damages of approximately US\$2.5 million with interest to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GOTT) arising from the destruction of the Police Headquarters building and other government properties during the insurrection. Abu Bakr refused to settle the debt, stating in a sworn affidavit that the ruling People's National Movement (PNM) government agreed to forego enforcing the debt in exchange for the JAM's assistance in its campaign and ultimate victory in the 2002 general election.

13. (U) The May 5 ruling focused on the admissibility of Bakr's sworn statement alleging that Prime Minister Manning had promised to forgive the debt. The Privy Council in London found the statement irrelevant and unenforceable and as such it cannot be tendered into evidence.

14. (U) Throughout his civil trial as well as his criminal sedition and terrorism trial, Abu Bakr has threatened to go public with the details of this arrangement and the questionable nature of the relationship between Patrick Manning and "community" (gang) leaders.

15. (SBU) Comment: Even if Bakr has no evidence to embarrass PM Manning, the GOTT may be inclined to reach a consent agreement that excludes the sale of some or all of the properties, specifically the JAM's Mucurapo mosque in Port of Spain. A local court ruling to sell the properties would put Bakr under significant pressure, with the risk that he could retaliate by inciting criminal gangs to increased violence. For similar reasons, it may be difficult to find buyers for the properties. End Comment.

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